

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Biweekly Period Ending March 11, 2000

Phoenix Metro Area

Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities

Due to the rapid growth of cable TV, telephone, and Internet services, **USWest and Cox Communications** could use a spokesman like "Johnny" of the old Philip Morris commercials to bark out: "Calling All Available Workers." The companies will be filling at least **1,000 new positions** over the next couple of years in sales, installation, customer service, marketing, and computer operations. And with turnover factored in, the companies will actually need about 2,000 workers. The public's desire for wireless gadgets, digital TV channels, and Internet and in-home telephone services is driving the demand. The need for qualified workers is so great that USWest has agreed to hire entire classes at area technical schools, a story in the *(Phoenix) Business Journal* said, adding that an ability to speak Spanish will bring an additional premium. To keep up with growth, **Cox is breaking ground in March** on a new **26-acre campus** at Deer Valley Road and 19th Avenue in **north Phoenix**. The campus will eventually be home to 1,500 employees and have 237,000 square feet of office space. Expected completion is next January.

Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate

The Phoenix metro area has call centers that service businesses in a wide assortment of industries — travel, banking, health care, insurance. But as of July it will be home to a customer-service facility of an e-commerce business. **NextCard**, an Internet-operated credit-card company based in San Francisco, will open a **regional headquarters employ-**

ing 700 near 40th and Van Buren streets to handle questions by telephone or e-mail from its 250,000 customers. Pay will range from \$8 to \$14 an hour, the company said. NextCard is the fourth credit-card company this year to announce plans to expand or consolidate operations in the Valley. One of these, **Metris Companies**, recently said it would **add 500 customer-service representatives** by the end of 2000 for its second Scottsdale credit-card call center. Minneapolis-based Metris employs 120 people at another Scottsdale facility. **Target and Dillard's** have also announced plans to expand credit-card operations this year.

Although Internet stock trading has expanded rapidly in recent years, there are still a few brokerage firms that do business "the old-fashion way." And one of them, St. Louis-based **Edward Jones**, believes the "human touch" will drive its business in the future as it plans to open its first significant operation outside of Missouri at Arizona State University's Research Park in Tempe. The three-building, 330,000-square-foot campus will **employ up to 1,000 people** in managerial, accounting, and information-technology jobs when it's completed in 2005. The first building will **open in the third quarter of 2001**. Research Park, which encompasses 324 acres between Elliott and Warner roads, just west of the Price Freeway, includes more than a dozen tenants — such as Motorola University, VLSI-Philips, and Avnet — that employ about 3,500 people.

Tucson Metro Area

Manufacturing

A Taiwanese company that makes computer

chassis and television cable boxes will **open its first U.S. operation** in Tucson **in April**. **Cheng Fwa Industrial Co.**, a precision-production metal company, will initially **employ 50 workers** in a 70,000-square-foot facility currently under construction at Century Park Research Center near the intersection of Kolb and Valencia roads. Cheng Fwa chose Tucson because it is close to one of its major clients, a Motorola Co. maquiladora factory in Nogales, Mexico.

Rain Bird Sprinkler Manufacturing Corp. plans to **expand** its Tucson operations **by early fall** when it moves into a building formerly used by chainsaw manufacturer McCulloch Corp. The Glendora, Calif.-based company will use 105,000 square feet of a plant at Southpoint Industrial Park at South Kolb and East Valencia roads. Rain Bird, which has positions in manufacturing, engineering, marketing, and customer support in Tucson, hasn't announced the number of additional jobs that will be created by the expansion.

Apta Software, a Tucson-based company which makes financial software for school systems, local governments, and nonprofit organizations, is **moving into larger quarters** at 5151 E. Broadway. Formerly known as ALSTEC Systems, Apta is aggressively marketing its primary product, AptaFund, to school districts in states with the largest number of public-school students — California, Texas, New York, and Florida. The company, which employs software engineers, technical writers, accountants, and support engineers, has seen its **workforce grow from 15 to 65** in little more than a year.

Balance of State

Services

Marriott Fairfield Inn will open a 64-room motel **in Yuma** by October. Located at Sunridge Drive and Pacific Avenue, the Fairfield Inn will be Marriott's first property in Yuma.

Direct Marketing Service (DMS), a national

telemarketing company, will **add 150 employees** when it moves into a new building at **Redondo Commerce Center in Yuma**. The move was expected to take place in mid-March.

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